



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Virginia Sponsored Amtrak Service Update

September 17, 2018

DRAFT

Overview



Ridership Update

- Slides 3-11

Marketing Program and Initiatives

- Slides 12-20

Service Improvement Plan

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Next Steps: Growing Ridership

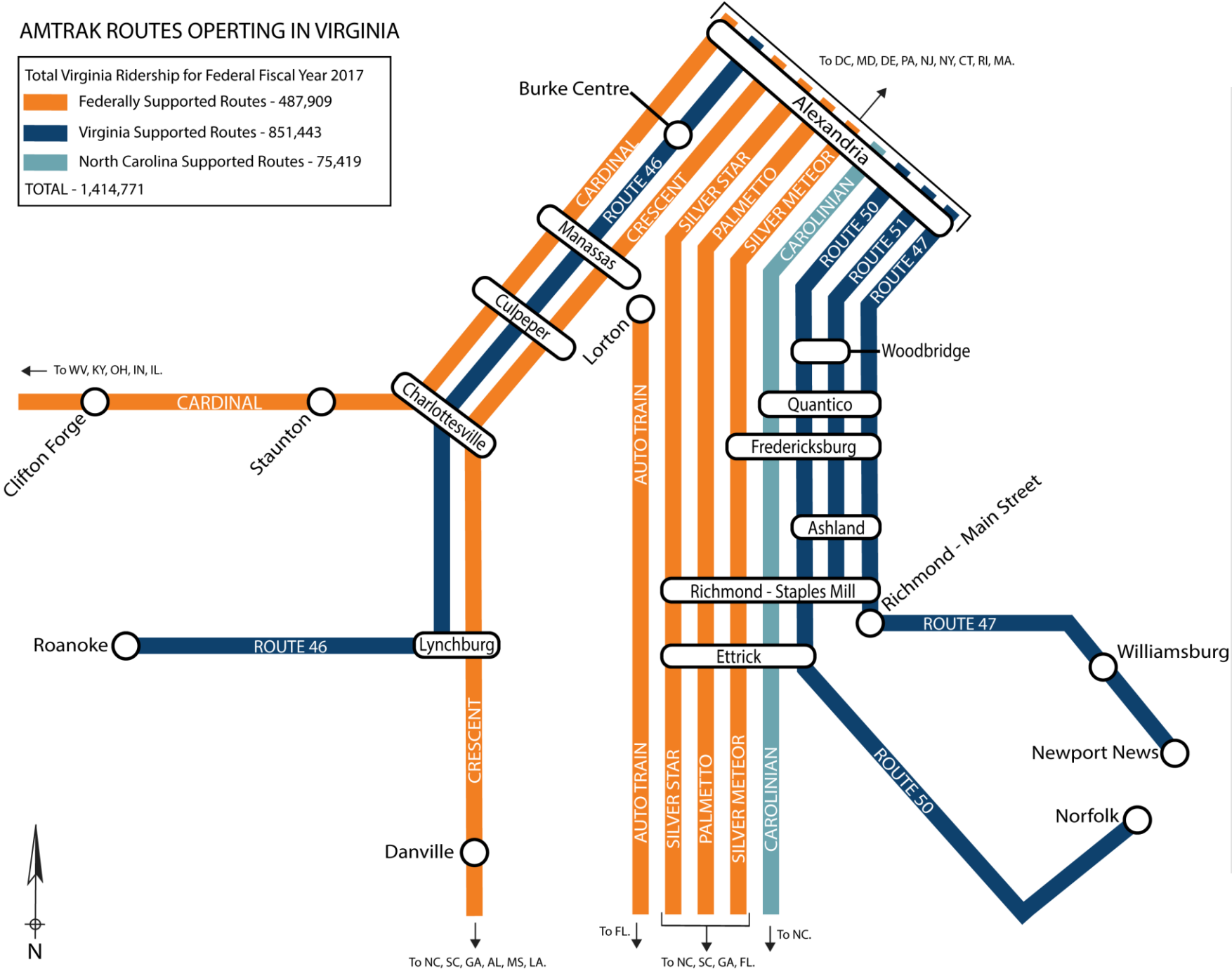
- Slide 24

Amtrak's Virginia Route Network



AMTRAK ROUTES OPERTING IN VIRGINIA

Total Virginia Ridership for Federal Fiscal Year 2017	
█	Federally Supported Routes - 487,909
█	Virginia Supported Routes - 851,443
█	North Carolina Supported Routes - 75,419
TOTAL - 1,414,771	



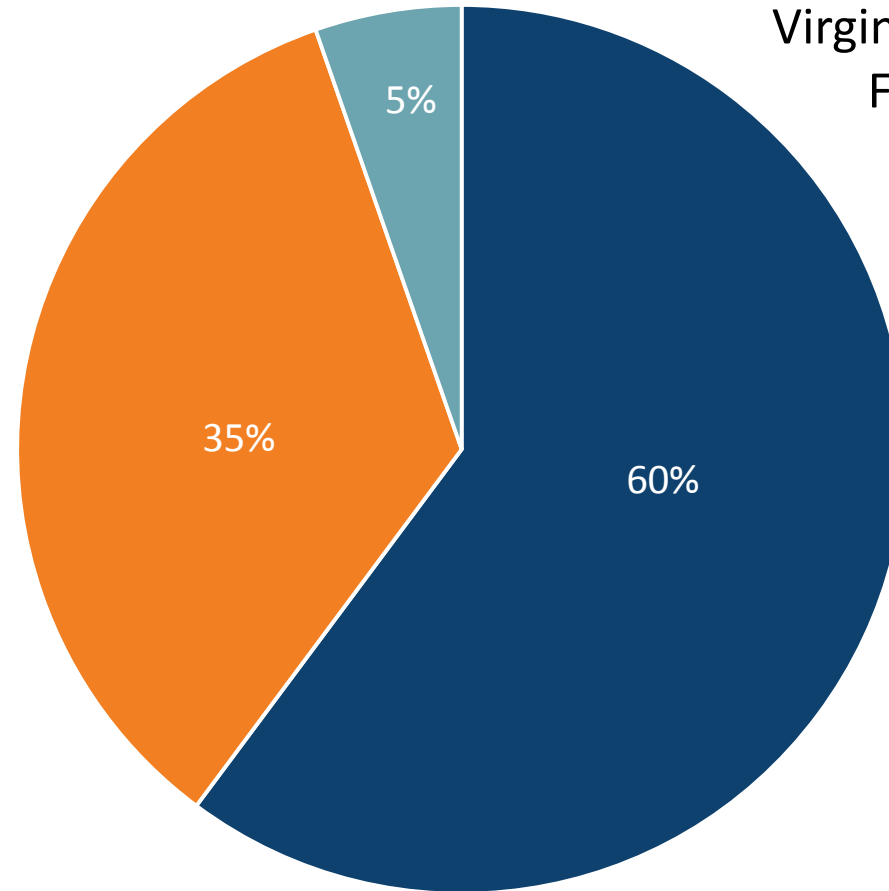
Amtrak's Virginia Route Network



Total Virginia Ridership

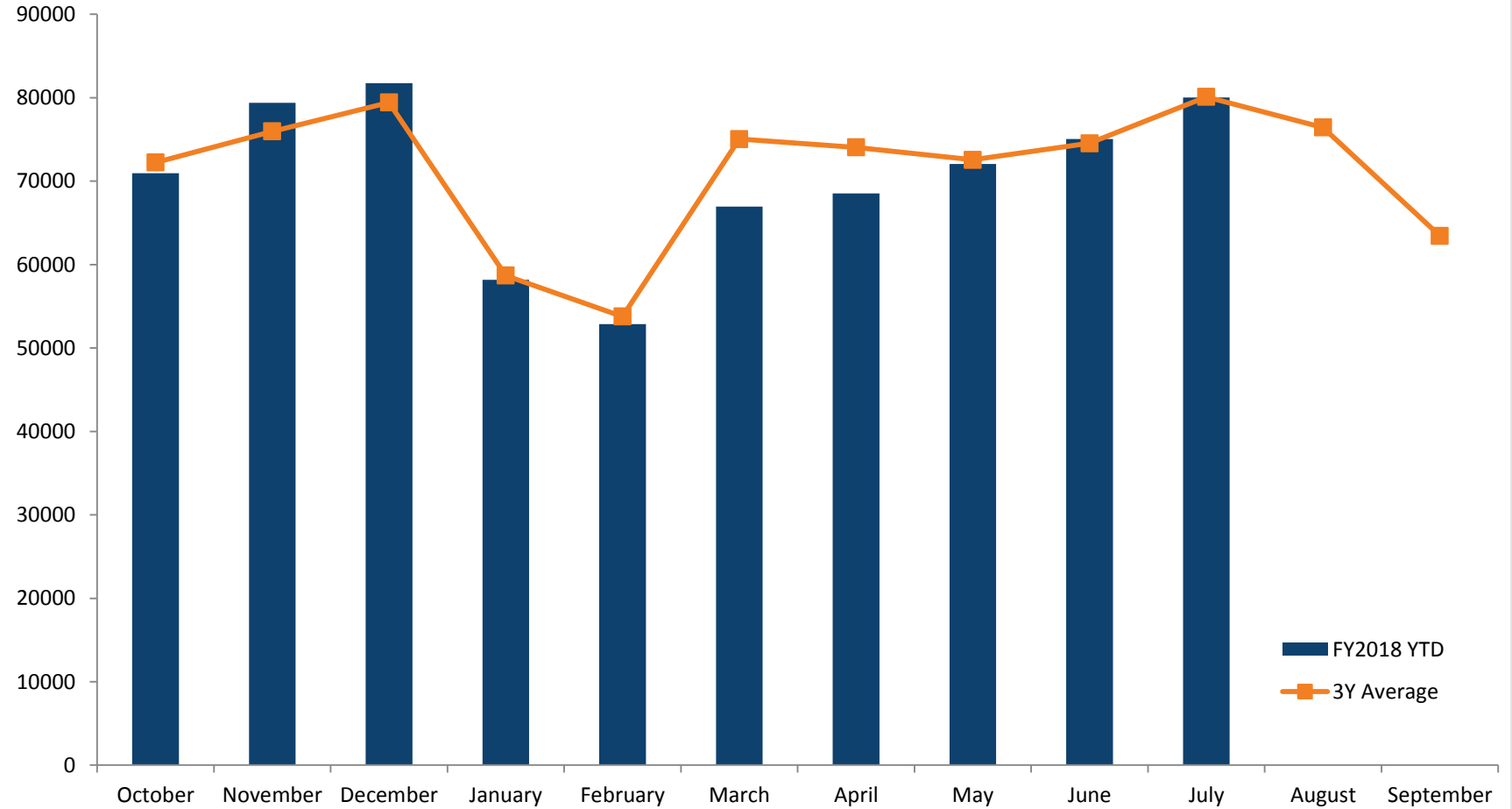
1,414,771

Virginia Riders in Federal
Fiscal Year 2017



■ VA Sponsored Routes ■ Long Distance Routes ■ NC Sponsored Routes

Virginia Sponsored Route Ridership



- The downward trend reported to CTB-Rail in June has normalized.
- Ridership in recent months has been on par with the average of the past 3 years.

Virginia Sponsored Route Ridership



Ridership Fluctuates Over Time

- Seasonal trends are expected
 - Summer and Holiday travel peaks
- Year over Year changes are expected
 - Macroeconomic trends (i.e. gas prices)
- Specific events can have temporary, unforeseen impacts
 - Weather; Construction; High-profile incidents

Virginia Sponsored Route Ridership



Federal Fiscal Year-To-Date (Oct. – Jul.)

Route 46 (Roanoke) Once Daily		
2017	2018	2017 – 2018 Change
159,659	174,813	+ 9.5%

Route 47 (Newport News) Twice Daily		
2017	2018	2017 – 2018 Change
274,557	268,441	- 2.2%

Route 50 (Norfolk) Once Daily		
2017	2018	2017 – 2018 Change
129,104	127,112	- 1.5%

Route 51 (Richmond) Twice Daily		
2017	2018	2017 – 2018 Change
147,674	135,341	- 8.4%

Virginia Sponsored Routes Total		
2017	2018	2017 – 2018 Change
710,994	705,707	- 0.7%

- Ridership on most routes, except for Richmond, has stabilized.

Virginia Sponsored Route Ridership



Each State Sponsored Route is Unique

- Roanoke Route has strong ridership growth since the extension in October 2017.
- Hampton Roads is a 2-station market.
 - Amtrak Thruway Bus connects Newport News and Norfolk
 - Newport News offers two daily round trips
 - Newport News offers midday service
 - Hampton Roads riders “open-jaw” between both stations
- Richmond Route has the most options with Hampton Roads, Long Distance, and the Carolinian.
 - Richmond has the busiest Amtrak station in the Southeast
 - Ridership in Richmond is down more than other Routes

Richmond Route Diagnostic



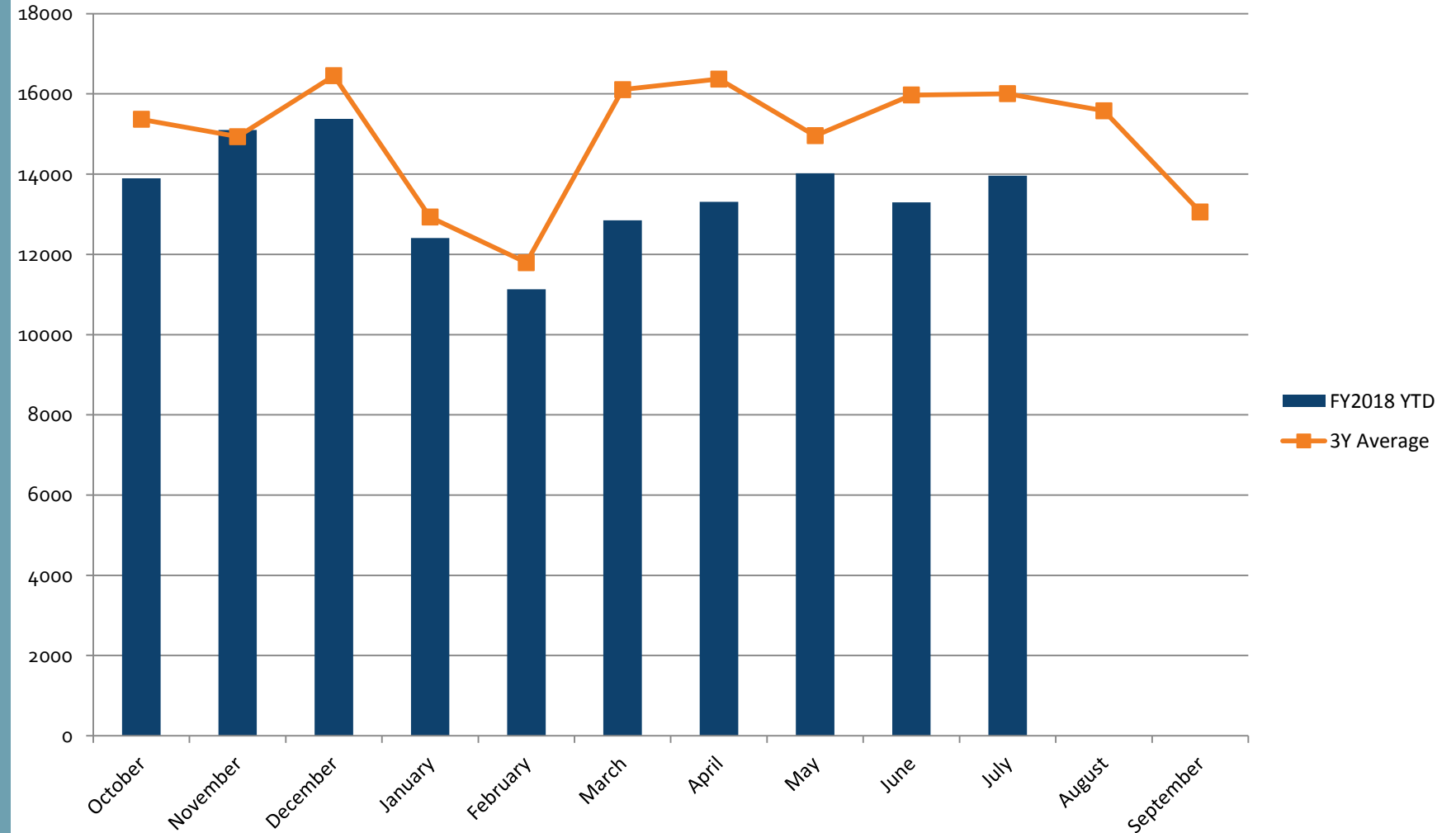
Richmond Route has not rebounded

- Acca Yard Construction
 - 15% of trains cancelled in March
 - 4.3% of trains cancelled in June
- Staples Mill Station Parking Expansion completed in June
- Spring and summer flooding delayed services
- Other trains continued to serve Richmond during cancellations.
 - Richmond trains staged in DC.
 - Newport News staged in Richmond.
 - Some Long Distance made it through with delays.
- Hampton Roads trains hit Richmond at optimal commuter times for DC arrival.
 - Staples Mill Station is top station on Norfolk Route

Virginia Sponsored Route Ridership

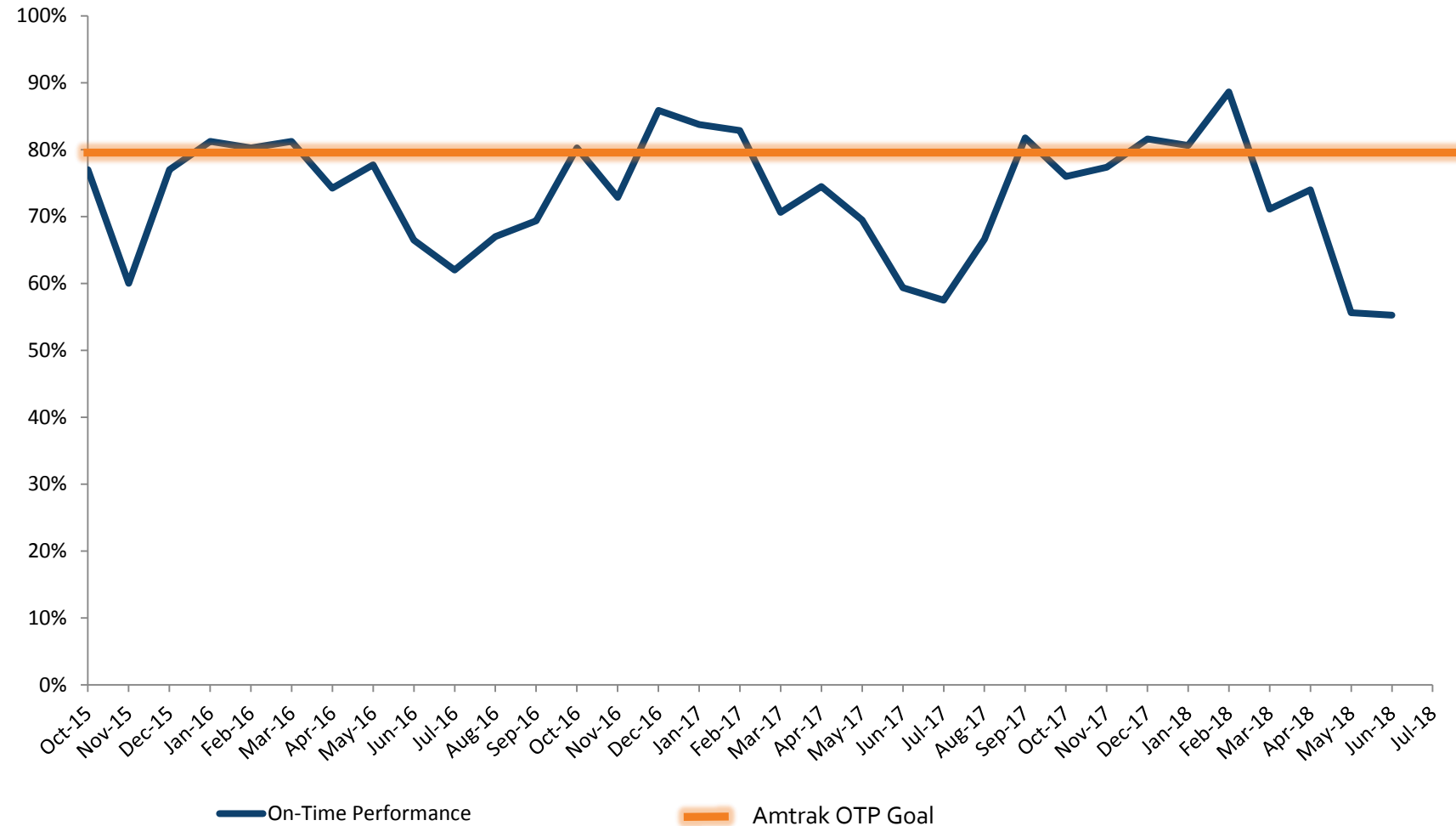


2018 YTD Monthly Ridership Totals vs. 3-Year Average
Richmond



- The Route 51 (Richmond) continues to lag behind the other Virginia sponsored routes.

On-Time Performance (OTP)



- OTP is affected by many factors: capacity, equipment, operations, and weather.
- OTP can have predictable cycles:
 - Construction season
 - Heat restrictions in Summer, snow in winter

Marketing Program & Initiatives

- Funding
 - \$1.7M Annual Budget
 - DRPT direct spend budget
 - Amtrak national marketing budget
- Partnership
 - Amtrak and DRPT Marketing teams
 - Consultant Support: Siddall Communications
- Strategy
 - Data trend analysis informs media buys
 - Monitor and redevelop strategies to grow ridership

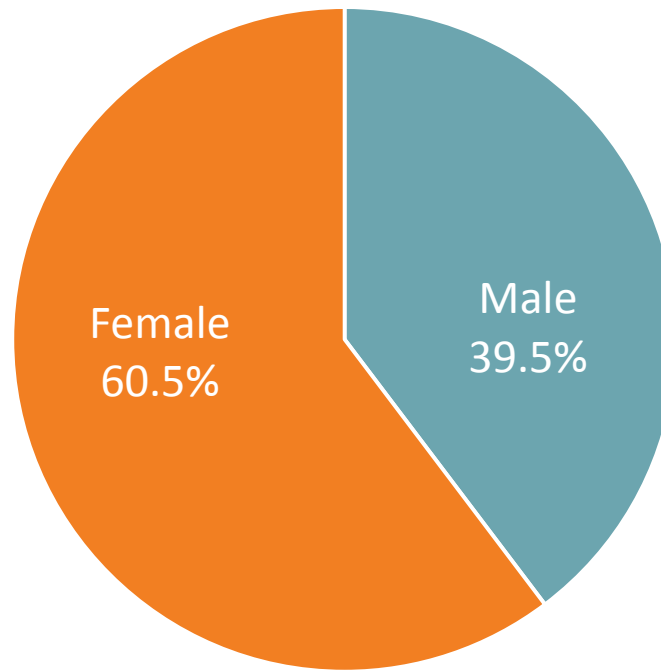


Marketing Data

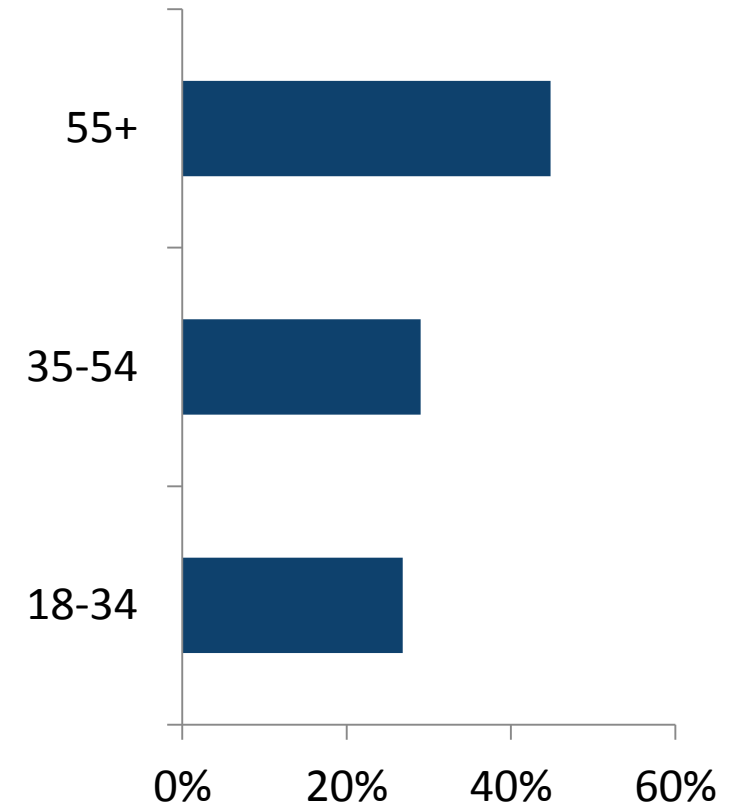


Who rides the trains?

Gender

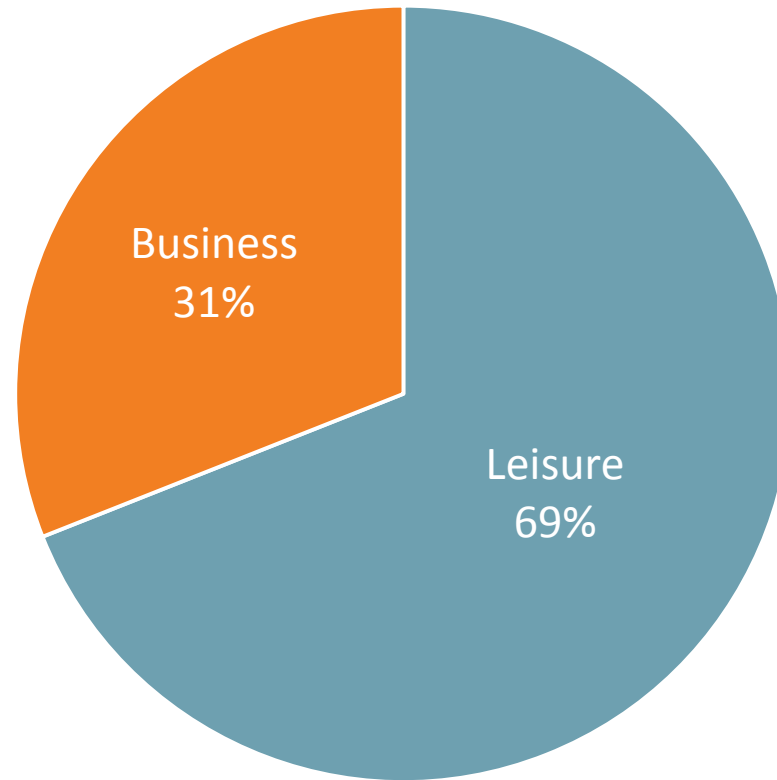


Age



Why are they riding the train?

Marketing Data

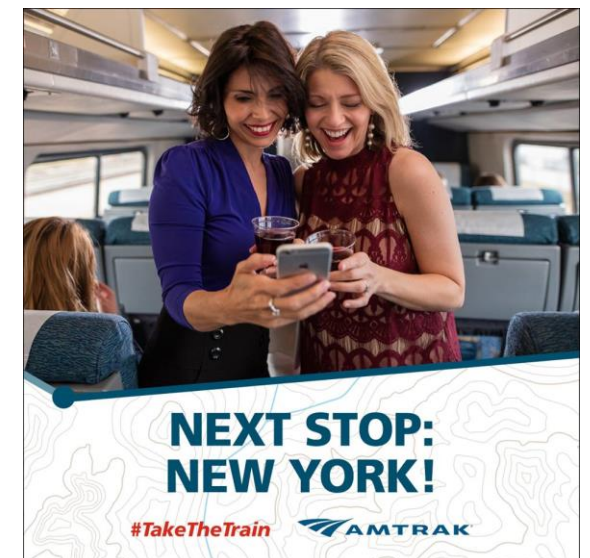


DRPT.

Marketing Data Top 5 City Pairs

Where are they going?

1. Richmond Staples Mill → Washington
2. Charlottesville → Washington
3. NYC → Richmond Staples Mill
4. Newport News → Washington
5. Charlottesville → NYC



Tactical Approaches

- Social Media
- Billboard
- Colleges and Universities



**ON THE JOB.
ON THE GO.**
A Smarter Way to Travel
AMTRAK



Media



Earned Media | Paid Media | In-Kind

THE ROANOKE TIMES

Layne: Amtrak's return to Roanoke part of new Virginia economy

Aubrey Layne Layne is the Virginia Secretary of Transportation and Chair of the Commonwealth Transportation Board Oct 30, 2017 (2)

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Amtrak announces completion of parking expansion at Staples Mill Road station

By ALEXANDRA CLINE Richmond Times-Dispatch Jun 28, 2018



Local News

All aboard: Passengers ride first Amtrak train in Roanoke

Tourist in Your Town: Travel on the Cheap in Hampton Roads

For your next trip out of Hampton Roads, you may want to take the Amtrak train — it's cheaper and you can get right on board when the train arrives.



Richmond

Bring your bike on some Richmond Amtrak trains



VIRGINIA IS FOR RAIL LOVERS™

Marketing Data FY2018 YTD



What are they willing to pay?

Discount	Terms	YTD Ridership	Impact on % Share
None	Full-Fare	359,729	57.5%
14-Day Advance	25%	132,168	21.1%
AAA	10%	10,823	1.7%
Children	50% - 1 child: 1 adult	15,006	2.4%
Disabled	10%	11,999	1.9%
Military	10%	10,196	1.6%
NARP	10%	1,576	0.3%
Senior	10% - 65+	49,062	7.8%
Veterans Advantage	15%	22,482	3.6%
Students	10%	8,584	1.5%
VRE Step-Up	15 – 20%	43,762	9.2%
Flash Sales	Terms Vary		

Marketing Research Plan



Method	Description	Schedule
Focus Group	Gaining Insight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they think about the Amtrak brand? • Why do they ride? VHSR Sample	Already Underway Mid-October Complete
Economic Forecasting	Understand consumer sensitivity to price increases and discounts.	Already Underway Late October Complete
Benchmark Survey	Target groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Leisure • Students • Non-riders • Military VHSR Sample	Field Work 2 nd Week of November Late December Complete

Virginia Customer Satisfaction Index

Reliability/OTP – How satisfied are you with the reliability and on-time performance of the train?

Value/Price – How satisfied are you with the value of Amtrak service received for the price paid for the trip?

Route	Factor	Very Satisfied	YTD Trend	Very Dissatisfied	YTD Trend
Lynchburg/Roanoke	Reliability/OTP	75%	-8%	8%	+3%
	Value/Price	79%	-4%	4%	+2%
Richmond	Reliability/OTP	75%	-2%	9%	+2%
	Value/Price	75%	-3%	4%	+1%
Norfolk	Reliability/OTP	80%	+3%	6%	-2%
	Value/Price	80%	-2%	4%	+2%
Newport News	Reliability/OTP	61%	-6%	19%	+9%
	Value/Price	71%	-6%	7%	+4%
Amtrak National	Reliability/OTP	74%	-2%	10%	+1%
	Value/Price	70%	-3%	6%	+2%

Service Improvement Plan



ON-BOARD COMMUNICATION

Issue: Unclear, inadequate updates at the Station and Onboard. Particularly during service disruptions.

Amtrak Commitment: Amtrak updated script and provided training to conductors to improve messaging and announcements.

ON-BOARD CLEANING

Issue: Inadequate cleaning of trains once entered into Virginia creates poor experience.

Amtrak Commitment: Cleaners have been assigned to VA services. Amtrak will assess program in November.

Wi-Fi UPGRADES

Issue: Service is slow and cell coverage inadequate along the Virginia sponsored Amtrak routes.

Amtrak Commitment: Amtrak briefed DRPT staff in August on what upgrades will be provided. Once program implementation is finished Amtrak and DRPT will assess improvements.

FOOD & BEVERAGE OPTIONS

Issue: Poor choices and high prices.

Amtrak Commitment: DRPT sent Amtrak a list of Virginia made items to include on the updated menu.



Upgrade Train Equipment (Re-fleet)

• **DRPT** •

- Amtrak has initiated new locomotive procurement and train set re-fleeting.
- Benefits to Virginia services:
 - Reduce dwell time in Washington Union Station by negating the need to change engines from diesel to electric.
 - Improved platform access with different level entrances
 - Better use of public funds for new equipment rather than expensive repairs on outdated equipment.
 - Reduce delays caused by mechanical failures.



Diesel Powered P42



Dual Mode Locomotive (NJ Transit)

Network Capacity Improvements



- Atlantic Gateway – \$535M
 - Franconia-Occoquan 3rd Track
 - Alexandria-Potomac 4th Track
- Arkendale 3rd Track Project - \$115M
- Acca Yard Bypass - \$132M
- Long Bridge – Cost Estimate Summer 2019



Improve Service & Grow Ridership



Short Term (1-5 Years)

- Develop strategies with Amtrak and Host RR to address frequent issues affecting On-Time Performance
- Monitor Amtrak's implementation of customer improvement plan and impact on customer service survey data
- Develop Marketing Strategies based on survey results
- Improve Wi-Fi performance on Amtrak trains

Medium Term (5-10 Years)

- Take an active role on multi-state committee to advise Amtrak on re-fleeting of locomotives and train equipment

Long Term (10+)

- Advance project to add capacity

Questions & Comments

